

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising

a tread portion,

a pair of sidewall portions,

a pair of bead portions,

a carcass extending between the bead portions,

a breaker disposed radially outside the carcass, and

a band disposed radially outside the breaker,

said tread portion provided on each side of the tire equator with an axially inner circumferential groove and an axially outer circumferential groove so that the tread portion is divided into a crown part, a pair of middle parts and a pair of axially outermost shoulder parts,

said band composed of a full width ply extending across the substantially overall width of the breaker and a pair of axially spaced edge plies, wherein

the crown part is formed as a circumferential rib,

each of the shoulder parts is provided with axial grooves and narrow grooves narrower in width than the axial grooves so that the shoulder part is circumferentially divided by the axial grooves into shoulder blocks, and each said shoulder block is subdivided into two block segments by one of the narrow grooves,

with respect to the tire circumferential direction,

said axial grooves are inclined such that a straight line drawn between the ends of each of the axial grooves is inclined at an angle ( $\theta_1$ ), and

said narrow grooves are inclined such that a straight line drawn between the ends of each of the narrow grooves is inclined at an angle ( $\theta_2$ ) reversely to said straight lines of the circumferentially adjacent axial grooves,

in a ground contacting face of the tire under a normally inflated loaded condition which face has axially outermost edges between which the ground contacting width TW is defined,

the circumferential length Ls of the ground contacting face at an axial position 10 % of TW axially inwards of each of the axially outermost edges is in a range of from 75 to 85 % of the circumferential length Lc of the ground contacting face at the center of the ground contacting width,

the tread portion comprises a radially inner tread rubber and a radially outermost tread rubber harder than the inner tread rubber,

excepting the grooved part of the tread portion, a percentage of a thickness of the outermost tread rubber to an overall tread rubber thickness is increased in an outer part defined as being axially outside each said inner circumferential groove when compared with that in a crown part Rc between the inner circumferential grooves.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

the number of said axial grooves in each said shoulder part is such that 2 to 4 grooves are included in the ground contacting face.

4. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein  
the angle ( $\theta_1$ ) is in a range of from 60 to 80 degrees.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Currently Amended) The pneumatic tire according to ~~claim 5~~ claim 1, wherein  
the outermost tread rubber [[Ga]] has a hardness of 60 to 62 degrees and  
the inner tread rubber [[Gb]] has a hardness of 54 to 58 degrees.
7. (Currently Amended) The pneumatic tire according to ~~claim 5~~ claim 1, wherein  
the outermost tread rubber [[Ga]] has a loss tangent  $\delta$  of 0.15 to 0.20 and  
the inner tread rubber [[Gb]] has a loss tangent  $\delta$  of 0.03 to 0.07.
8. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein  
the axial grooves in the shoulder parts are inclined to the same direction with the  
angles ( $\theta_1$ ) in a range of from 60 to 75 degrees.
9. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein  
the angles ( $\theta_2$ ) are in a range of from 40 to 50 degrees.

10. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

each of the axial grooves is made up of one circumferential segment and two lateral segments extending from both ends of the circumferential segment so as to have a crank-shape.

11. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 10, wherein

each of the narrow grooves is a zigzag groove.

12. (Currently Amended) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

each of the middle parts is provided with axial grooves and narrow grooves narrower in width than the axial grooves so that the middle part is circumferentially divided by the axial grooves into middle blocks, and each said middle block is subdivided into two block segments by one of the narrow grooves,

wherein with respect to the tire circumferential direction,  
said axial grooves in each of the middle parts are inclined such that a straight line drawn between the ends of each of the axial grooves is inclined at an angle ( $\theta_1$ ), and

said narrow grooves in each of the middle parts are inclined such that a straight line drawn between the ends of each of the narrow grooves is inclined at an angle ( $\theta_2$ ) reversely to said straight lines of the circumferentially adjacent axial grooves.

13. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 12, wherein

the axial grooves in the shoulder parts and middle parts are inclined to the same

direction with the angles ( $\theta_1$ ) in a range of from 60 to 75 degrees.

14. (Currently Amended) The pneumatic tire according to claim 12, wherein

each of the axial grooves in each of the middle parts is made up of one circumferential segment and two lateral segments extending from both ends of the circumferential segment so as to have a crank-shape.

15. (Currently Amended) The pneumatic tire according to claim 14, wherein

each of the narrow grooves in each of the middle parts is a zigzag groove.

16. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

the axially inner circumferential grooves and the axially outer circumferential grooves are zigzag grooves.

17. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

the axial distance  $W_a$  from the tire equator to the center line of each of the axially inner circumferential grooves is in the range of not less than 5 %, but not more than 12 % of the ground contacting width  $TW$ .

18. (Previously Presented) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein

the circumferential grooves each have a groove width in a range of from 2 % to 8 % of the ground contacting width  $TW$ ,

the axial grooves each have a groove width of from 6.0 to 8.0 mm, and

the narrow grooves each have a groove width of not more than 1.5 mm.

19. (New) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein  
said percentage is gradually increased from the axially inside to the axially outside of the  
tire.

20. (New) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein  
said breaker comprises two cross plies of steel cords laid at an angle of from 10 to 45  
degrees with respect to the tire equator,

the width of the breaker is not less than 95 %, but not more than 105 % of the ground  
contacting width, and

the width of the edge band ply is not less than 12.5 %, but not more than 20 % of the  
breaker width.

21. (New) The pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein  
the circumferential length of the ground contacting face is gradually decreased from the  
center of the ground contacting width towards the tread edges.